



Sgt.
Brad Early
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Police Department

ABBIE DARST | PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Nearly 13 years after taking a position as a student aide for the Eastern Kentucky University Police Department, Brad Early knows the campus, the staff and the students he sees daily. Coming to ECU originally to earn a degree in fire science, Early fell in love with law enforcement and made the switch to pursue life as an officer instead of a firefighter. In his 10 years of service with the ECU Police Department, Early has served as a Rape Aggression Defense instructor, earned recognition as a regional school resource officer of the year and most recently was named the Youth in Action officer of the year. When he was promoted to sergeant in July 2013, his title changed, but his passion for the students, faculty, staff and community he serves on campus remains the same.

In 2008, I began teaching as a Rape Aggression Defense instructor. It always irks me when hearing about or responding to domestic violence or sexual assault calls that most women haven't been in a confrontation and think of themselves as weaker. It's always good to tell them that they aren't; there are steps they can take to protect themselves.

At the beginning of a class these women are all timid and shy, not making eye contact with you. At the end of class after they've beaten me up and I'm all sweaty and trying to gather my breath, it's very rewarding. When they walk out, their heads are high, they make eye contact with everybody and they've made friends.

When I began in the SRO position, I tell you what, I was really spoiled. Model (Laboratory School) is a small family. There are 720 kids and faculty there, and I felt like I belonged. I still keep quite a few relationships with parents and staff, and now I'm seeing those students on ECU's campus. It's great to see them out making something of their lives.

On campus, we get a broad mix of activity. From medical assist calls to harassment calls to fender benders. I like that mix. We handle everything we can. There may be instances that we don't deal with regularly. We'll call in another agency and they'll assist hand in hand with us or whatever we need them to do.

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It's a bit of a zoo at my place. I've got two dogs, my girlfriend has two dogs. We have a cat, a snake, a chameleon and two fish. Obviously we're both animal people. If the occasion were to arise, I would be interested in serving as a K-9 officer.

I do a lot of work with Kentucky Youth in Action. Their main mission is to prevent underage drinking. We go to liquor stores placing bright stickers on multi-packs of beer and calling attention to the fact that it is illegal to buy alcohol for, or give alcohol to, minors. They are called Sticker Shock events. We try to have these events near major days like the Super Bowl, July 4th, New Year's Eve and Christmas.

I've volunteered with Youth in Action for about seven years. I enjoy interacting with kids who are very influential, especially at the middle school/high school age. There are rewards that come along with that. It's being there, assisting and helping the kids and trying to teach lessons — that's why it is important to me.

I like to take the mistakes I've made throughout my life and the lessons I've learned from friends and family, and try to pass that on. I have a great family and they have been my greatest influence.

One thing that stands out in my mind is an old band director back in middle school who told us, 'I don't care what you aspire to be in life — if it's garbage collector, OK — but be the best at it that you can.' And that has always stuck out in my mind.

During the Stephen Foster Music Camp two or three years ago, we had a medical assist call that a child was unresponsive. I responded and he was breathing, had a pulse — it was just like he was asleep and wouldn't wake up. EMS was able to wake him, but he was not very coherent. We took him to the hospital and I found out from camp staff that the boy's mom would be coming and had just gotten out of out-patient surgery herself that day. I went to help the kid and get as much

information from him and the camp staff as I could. ...

When the mom arrived, she was in obvious distress. The hospital staff was doing their job — they wanted information from her about her son and insurance. Obviously momma bear just wanted to check on her cub. And you don't mess with momma bear when it comes to her cubs. I told the hospital staff she was coming with me. I took her back and she was able to see her son. As they continued asking questions I was able to give them the information they needed and take the pressure off of the mom. ...

The reason this sticks out is because unbeknownst to me, the father was/is in the military, was stationed away and couldn't respond to this emergency with his family. He sent a nice email to my chief, thanking me for helping his family when he couldn't. Every time I start to get frustrated at work or fed up with something, I keep that in mind and I'll go look at it and pick myself up.

In difficult situations, I have learned to work the problem, not become the problem. You're trying to find a solution to what's going on right there. Different scenarios will predict what you are doing, but I've been certified in CPR since I was 14. Obviously things change, but now it's almost second nature to me. Fortunately, I don't have to perform it too often, but it's one of the trainings you want to keep up and keep fresh in your mind.

Even though I get off at 10 p.m. and don't go to sleep until about midnight, I get up at 5:30 a.m. every week day and head to the gym. I'm usually there from 6 to 8 or 8:30 a.m. I've done weight lifting routines, cardio routines, but you get in such a groove with it and don't benefit as much anymore. So the ladies and gentleman over the Fitness and Wellness Center give me different motivators and work me differently than what I'm used to doing on my own. 🏋️

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